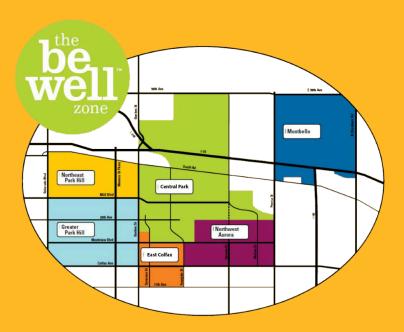


## **ABOUT US**



**be well** is a grassroots movement that brings communities together to take charge of their health and wellness. Our mission is to effect programs, policies, and practices to create health equity and access for all people with a vision of a culture where everyone has an equitable opportunity to achieve their desired health-regardless of race, income, gender, location, or other social barriers. be well works to provide measurable improvements in health and wellness within the be well Zone through policy, systems, programs and changes in the built environment. We focus on five neighborhoods in Denver and Aurora: Northeast Park Hill, Montbello, East Colfax, Central Park and Northwest Aurora

As a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan initiative of the Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities, **be well** supports civic engagement and encourages voters to stay informed, while remaining neutral on political candidates, parties, and ballot initiatives.



#### Welcome to be well's 2024 Voter Education Guide.

This guide is more than just a tool to help you navigate the upcoming election—it's a call to action. At this crucial time, voting is one of the most powerful ways to face the moment, not just for your health and well-being but for the health of your community and the future of policies that impact us all. By casting your vote, you're taking an active role in shaping the world around you, stepping up to today's challenges, and helping to create a healthier, more engaged society. Let this guide be your resource as you face this moment, and make your voice heard by voting down the ballot.

# HOW TO VOTE!

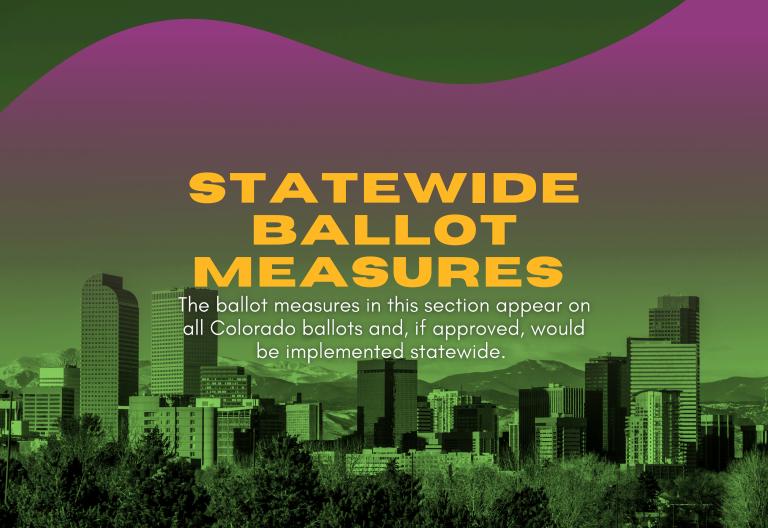
Every registered voter in Colorado will receive a mailed ballot between **October 11 and October 18, 2024.** 

To ensure you receive your ballot, register to vote or update your address online at **GoVoteColorado.gov**, where you can also verify your voter registration.

Beginning Monday, October 30, you can visit any in-person Voter Service Center in your county to register, vote, request a ballot, or resolve any election-related issues, all the way up until 7:00 PM on **Election Day**, **Tuesday**, **November 5**, 2024.









This amendment would add the right to abortion directly into Colorado's state constitution, meaning that it would make it even harder for future lawmakers to change the law. It also makes it so your health insurance can cover the cost of an abortion if you need one.

#### AMENDMENT 79: YOUR BODY, YOUR CHOICE: PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Healthcare isn't always accessible and affordable, especially for the 20-25% of folks in the be well Zone who live below the poverty line. This amendment protects the right to abortion and ensures it remains affordable through insurance coverage. This means it can reduce financial burdens, especially for low-income women who rely on public health services.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You believe women should have control over their own health decisions, and you want to make sure abortion stays legal and affordable.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You might feel that abortion should not be added to the state constitution and prefer to keep the existing legal protections as they are and leave room for future changes.



Amendment 80 is about giving families the right to choose between public schools, charter schools, private schools, or even homeschooling. Basically, it's saying parents get to decide where their kids go.

Important to note: Colorado currently has a Public Schools of Choice law that lets students sign up for schools outside their neighborhood district, giving them more options, some refer to this as school choice.

## AMENDMENT 80: SCHOOL CHOICE

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Choices are great, but in the be well zone, where public schools serve a majority of low-income and BIPOC students, expanding school choice could strain already limited resources. With nearly 75% of students in some areas qualifying for free or reduced lunch, any reduction in public school funding could increase educational disparities and reduce access to quality education for these students.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You want to expand school choice, allowing families more options for where their kids go to school.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You believe this could hurt public schools by taking away funding they need to improve and support all students.





Right now, vets in Colorado who are 100% permanently disabled get a property tax break—50% off the first \$200,000 of their home's value. This new amendment would extend that same tax break to more vets, specifically those who have serious disabilities that keep them from working. So, starting in 2025, if you're a vet who can't work because of service-related disabilities, you could qualify for this tax break too.

## AMENDMENT G: PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR VETERANS

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Our veterans have given so much, and for many, life after service isn't easy—especially when dealing with disabilities that affect their ability to work. For instance, Denver County has over 4,000 disabled veterans, and the be well Zone includes various areas with significant veteran populations. This means vets who've had their lives changed by service can get a little more financial relief when it comes to owning a home.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You say we should support veterans, especially those who can't work because of service-related injuries.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You might be concerned about how the state would pay for the tax breaks and whether this takes money away from other services or groups.



Amendment I is about removing the right to bail for people charged with first-degree murder. Right now, bail lets you pay to stay out of jail while you wait for your trial, and you get your money back when the trial's over if you show up. But this amendment says, "If you're charged with first-degree murder, no bail for you"—unless there's super strong evidence showing you're likely innocent.

# AMENDMENT : CONSTITUTIONAL BAIL EXCEPTION FOR FIRST DEGREE MURDER

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

In the be well zone there are especially higher than-average rates of arrests involving people of color, who make up over 60% of the zone's population. Some people are worried this amendment could exacerbate existing inequalities in the justice system like longer pretrial detentions, further impacting families and communities already vulnerable to over policing. Others think this amendment is good because it could keep dangerous people off the streets and others.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You believe people accused of something as serious as first-degree murder shouldn't get bail if the evidence is strong. This could help keep the community safe.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You might think this amendment could unfairly keep people in jail who haven't been proven guilty yet.



This one is all about love and recognition. Right now, the Colorado constitution says that only a marriage between one man and one woman is valid. Amendment J says that all loving unions deserve to be recognized, no matter who you love.



#### AMENDMENT J: MARRIAGE EQUALITY

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

The be well zone is home to many diverse types of individuals and families, including LGBTQIA+ individuals (nearly 10% of households are led by same-sex couples). Removing the ban on same-sex marriage ensures that all families in the area have equal rights and legal recognition, promoting fairness and inclusion across the community.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You would remove the ban on same-sex marriage from the Colorado constitution, affirming that all marriages regardless of gender—are valid and recognized in the state.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You want to keep the current Colorado constitutional language, which defines marriage as only between one man and one woman, though this language has not been enforced since the 2015 Supreme Court ruling.

This proposes a shift in Colorado's election schedule, moving certain key deadlines forward by one week.

#### This change would:

- Shift submission timeline to submit signatures for initiatives and referendum petitions, which are currently due within 90 days of the end of the legislative session; the amendment would require submission within 83 days of adjournment.
- Require judges to file their intent to seek another term one week earlier.
- Publish the content of ballot measures in local newspapers 30 days earlier than current law requires.

## AMENDMENT K: MODIFY ELECTION DEADLINES

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Amendment K could significantly affect be well zone residents, where ballot initiatives and referendums address issues like housing, healthcare, and public safety. Accelerating deadlines may pressure community groups to organize and gather signatures faster, but giving election officials more time to process longer ballots could ensure residents' voices are accurately reflected. This balance between timing and accuracy is crucial in a community driven by grassroots civic engagement.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You support shifting election deadlines up by a week, including for ballot initiatives, referendums, and judges' retention. It also requires earlier ballot information, giving officials more time for complex ballots.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You would keep the current election deadlines as they are, giving citizens and groups the same amount of time to collect signatures and submit petitions as before.



Proposition 127 would ban the hunting and trapping of mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx in Colorado

#### PROPOSITION 127:

#### BAN ON HUNTING MOUNTAIN LIONS, BOBCATS, AND LYNX

### WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

We found no specific impact to the be well Zone.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

It would ban hunting and trapping of mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx in Colorado. People who support this believe it will protect these animals from being hunted for trophies or fur.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

It means hunting of mountain lions and bobcats would continue under current regulations. Opponents think hunting helps manage animal populations and that stopping it could hurt wildlife management.



This initiative is about how long folks convicted of certain violent crimes have to wait before they can ask for parole. Right now, if someone's convicted of things like second-degree murder or first-degree assault, they could apply for parole after serving 75% of their sentence—and for good behavior, they can even reduce their time. If this initiative passes, starting January 1, 2025, they'll have to serve at least 85% of their sentence before they can even think about parole.

## PROPOSITION 128: LONGER MINIMUM PRISON TIME FOR VIOLENT CRIMES

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

In the be well zone where over 30% of households have a family member impacted by the justice system, lengthening parole eligibility could place more strain on families. Removing good behavior as a factor for parole may prevent individuals from reintegrating into society sooner, leading to longer-term consequences for residents already dealing with high incarceration rates.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You believe it's important to keep violent offenders in prison longer to ensure community safety and that they're fully accountable for their actions.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You might think this approach is too harsh and doesn't consider the potential for rehabilitation. You could be worried about the impact on families and how it may perpetuate a cycle of incarceration.

#### PROPOSITION 129: ESTABLISHING VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES

## WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Proposition 129 would create a new mid-level position in veterinary care called a Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA). VPAs would hold a master's degree in veterinary clinical care and perform tasks like routine surgeries and diagnostics under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. This aims to address the shortage of veterinarians, particularly in rural areas, and potentially reduce the cost of care.

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

In the be well zone, where many families own pets, affordable veterinary care can be crucial. Creating the VPA role could make vet services more accessible by reducing costs and helping fill shortages in underserved areas, benefiting the community's overall wellbeing.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You support creating this new VPA position, allowing individuals with advanced training to provide certain veterinary services, which supporters believe will help with vet shortages and lower costs for care.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You want to keep the current system where only veterinarians and vet technicians provide care, with no new mid-level position created.

Opponents argue that expanding the role of vet techs, instead of creating a new profession, would be a safer way to address shortages.



Proposition 130 would create a Peace Officer Training and Support Fund in Colorado. The state would allocate \$350 million to law enforcement agencies to increase officer pay, provide bonuses, and hire more officers. The funds would also be used for training and college education. It also includes a \$1 million death benefit for families of officers killed in the line of duty, with about \$4 million allocated annually to cover those benefits.

## PROPOSITION 130: PEACE OFFICER TRAINING AND SUPPORT FUND

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

About 65% of residents express concern about the impact of increased policing on marginalized communities. Public safety is a concern in the be well zone, where crime rates are higher than the state average. While some may welcome more law enforcement, this proposition raises important questions about how best to balance safety and community wellbeing.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You want to create the Peace Officer Training and Support Fund, increasing funding for law enforcement.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You want to keep the current funding levels and structures for law enforcement in place, without the creation of a new state fund.



This one would add a 6.5% tax on guns and ammo. So, if this passes, the tax would be paid by gun dealers and manufacturers. The money from this tax wouldn't just sit around, though—it'd go straight into a fund called the **Firearms and Ammunition Excise Tax**Cash Fund. And what would that fund do? It'd help pay for things like crime victim services, education programs, and mental and behavioral health services for kids and veterans.

#### PROPOSITION KK: FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION EXCISE TAX CASH FUND

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

The be well zone has experienced higher-than-average rates of gun violence, making community safety a priority. A 6.5% tax on firearms and ammunition could generate essential funding for crime victim services, mental health programs, and violence prevention initiatives that are sorely needed in this area. This tax increase is for manufacturers, **not** individuals.

#### UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You believe the firearm industry should help fund services that address violence and its impact, and this tax is a step toward holding them accountable.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You want to keep things as they are, with no additional tax on firearms and ammunition sales, meaning the firearm industry wouldn't contribute extra funds for these services.



Proposition 131 is all about switching up how we do elections in Colorado. Basically, there are two big changes: top-four primaries and ranked-choice voting. Here's how it works—during primaries, instead of just two candidates moving forward, the top four vote-getters would make it to the general election. Then, in the general election, voters rank those candidates by preference, like a "1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice" situation. If no one gets over 50% of the votes right away, the lowest-ranked candidates are eliminated, and their votes go to the next preferred candidate until someone gets a majority.

## PROPOSITION 131: ALL PARTY PRIMARIES AND RANKED-CHOICE VOTING

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Ranked Choice Voting could impact how elections are run in the Be Well Zone by giving voters more options and potentially increasing voter engagement. However, it may also require more voter education to ensure people understand the new process and how their votes are counted.



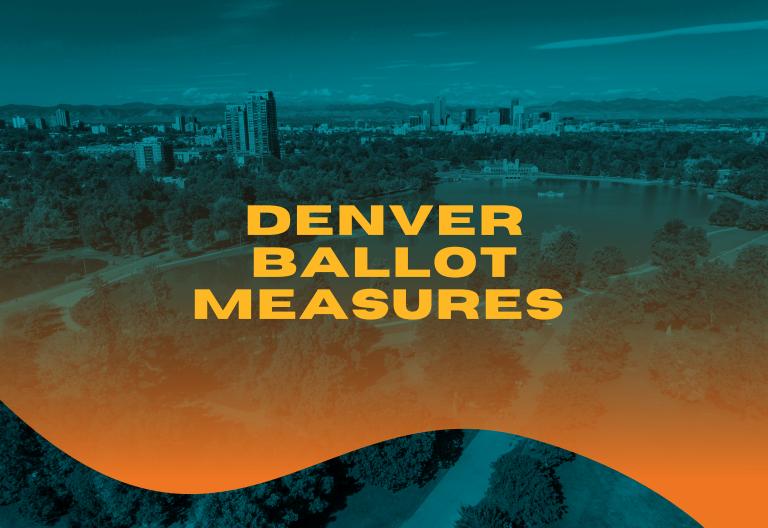
#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

It means Colorado would adopt Ranked Choice Voting for statewide elections, giving voters the ability to rank candidates by preference and electing candidates with majority support.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

It means Colorado would continue using the current system, where voters select only one candidate and the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they don't have a majority.





Denver City Council is asking voters to approve a 0.34% sales tax increase, raising it from 8.81% to 9.15%. This is an additional 34 cents on a \$100 purchase, generating \$70 million annually to support Denver Health, the city's safety net hospital. The funds will help cover operational costs, ensuring the hospital can continue providing essential services to those in need, regardless of their ability to pay.

## 20: DENVER HEALTH FUNDING

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Denver Health serves many vulnerable residents in the be well zone, where over 15% of the population is uninsured and more than 30% of residents live below the poverty line. The additional \$70 million annually would help maintain services like emergency care, mental health, and primary care that many in the community rely on. While the sales tax increase could put pressure on lowincome households, the tax does not include essential items like gas, food, and feminine hygiene products.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You support increasing the sales tax to provide more funding for Denver Health, helping them continue to serve people regardless of their ability to pay.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You oppose the sales tax increase and think there may be other ways to fund Denver Health without raising costs for residents.



Denver is proposing a 0.5% sales tax increase to fund affordable housing. If it passes, the sales tax would go from 8.81% to 9.31%—that's 50 cents more on every \$100 spent. The extra tax is expected to raise around \$100 million a year, which would go toward building new affordable housing, maintaining existing units, and acquiring properties that could be turned into affordable housing.

## 2R: AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Housing affordability is a major issue in the be well zone, where nearly 50% of residents are renters and many are cost-burdened, spending over 30% of their income on housing. This proposal could help alleviate some of the housing struggles by raising \$100 million annually for affordable housing projects. While the sales tax increase might worry some, supporters believe it's necessary to combat rising rents and housing insecurity in the community.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT: IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You support raising the sales tax by 0.5% to fund affordable housing projects, helping to build and maintain homes for people who might otherwise get priced out of Denver.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You oppose the sales tax increase and think there may be other ways to address the housing crisis without raising costs for residents at the checkout counter.



RTD (Regional Transportation District) wants to keep all the tax money it collects without having to issue refunds under TABOR (Taxpayer's Bill of Rights). Voters allowed this back in 1995 and 1999 to help RTD pay off bond debt for transit projects. Now that the debt is almost paid off, RTD is asking through Ballot Issue 7A if they can keep this arrangement permanently to continue funding public transit improvements in areas like Denver, Boulder, and Jefferson counties.

## 7A: RTD'S REQUEST TO STAY EXEMPT FROM TABOR

### WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Public transportation is critical in the be well zone, where many rely on buses and light rail for commuting. Over 10,000 households in this area do not have access to a car, making public transit essential for getting to work, school, and healthcare. By allowing RTD to keep all tax revenue, the measure could help maintain and expand services.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You agree that RTD should continue keeping all the tax revenue it collects and use it for public transportation improvements without giving refunds to taxpayers.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You believe RTD should be subject to TABOR rules again, which would limit how much money they can keep and possibly provide refunds to taxpayers if RTD collects more than needed.

Denver Public Schools (DPS) is asking voters to approve a \$975 million bond to maintain and upgrade school buildings across the district. A bond is basically a loan that DPS would pay back over time, and the funds would be used for things like building repairs, adding air conditioning, and improving classrooms.

Here's a quick breakdown of where the money would go:

- \$301 million to repair and maintain the 154 existing schools.
- \$240 million to install air conditioning in 29 schools.
- \$124 million to build new schools, including one in northeast Denver.
- \$127 million for upgrading arts, athletic, and innovation spaces.
- \$100 million to improve learning environments in 136 schools.
- \$83 million for safety and technology improvements.

## 4A: DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOND

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

Schools in the be well zone serve many low-income and students of color, with over 70% qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Investing in infrastructure, like air conditioning and modern learning environments, could greatly benefit them. This bond proposal includes public and charter schools such as Dr. MLK Jr. Early College, Montbello High School, Robert F. Smith STEAM Academy, and others in the Be Well Zone. More details are on the DPS Bond Dashboard. However, the \$975 million bond could raise property taxes, raising concerns for residents facing rising living costs.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You're in favor of investing \$975 million to upgrade and maintain Denver's schools, improving learning environments and adding things like air conditioning and better facilities.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You don't support the bond, possibly because of concerns over the size of the request, tax implications, or other ways to fund these projects without such a large loan.



This initiative would ban the building and operation of slaughterhouses in Denver starting in 2026. Denver currently has one big slaughterhouse, the largest lamb-packing plant in the country, so if this passes, it would close down that facility and stop any future ones from opening. The city would also have to step up and provide job training and employment programs for workers impacted by the ban.

## BALLOT MEASURE 309: BANNING SLAUGHTERHOUSES

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

This is big for the Be Well Zone because the slaughterhouse is a major employer, and its closure could lead to the loss of over 2,700 jobs and an \$861 million drop in economic activity, impacting families, local businesses, housing, and health services. There's also concern that closing the slaughterhouse could raise the price of lamb, affecting those who use it for religious purposes. On the other hand, some believe banning slaughterhouses could improve the environment and quality of life, benefiting communities affected by pollution.

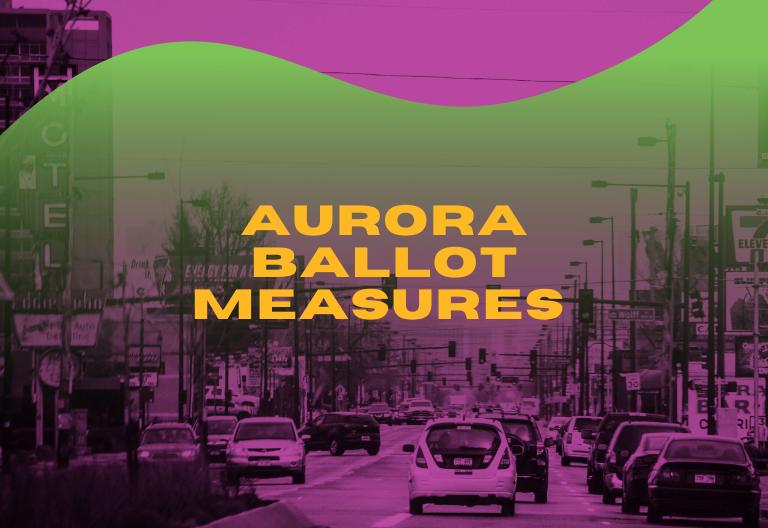
## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You agree it's time to move away from industries that contribute to pollution or animal cruelty.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You're concerned about the loss of jobs and the massive economic hit the community could take. It's a big risk, especially for families who rely on those paychecks.





Right now, if you live in Aurora, you can't own certain breeds of dogs—specifically, American Pit Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers. This measure asks if it's time to repeal that ban and let people own these dogs, with certain rules still in place for handling aggressive or dangerous animals (same rules that apply to all dogs, not just pit bulls).



## AURORA'S PIT BULL BAN: IS IT TIME TO LIFT THE LEASH?

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

For many in the be well zone, the pit bull ban has been a long-debated issue. The area is home to many responsible dog owners who believe the ban unfairly targets specific breeds rather than addressing proper training and ownership. Repealing the ban could allow more families to own pit bulls, but others worry about potential safety risks if owners don't manage their pets properly.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You support repealing the ban, allowing people in Aurora to own pit bulls with the same responsibilities as any other dog breed.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You want to keep the current ban on pit bulls in place, continuing to prohibit these breeds in the city.

This asks voters if Aurora Public Schools (APS) can take on \$1 billion in debt (but no new taxes) to make major upgrades across the district. Here's what the money would do:

- Security Upgrades: New cameras, locks, and safer entryways.
- Job Skills Training: Building a healthcare-focused school (P-TECH) for career-ready certifications.
- Career & Tech Education (CTE): Expanding job training programs in all high schools.
- Mental Health: Creating more space for mental health services in schools.
- Renovations: Repairing roofs, HVAC systems, and other aging infrastructure.
- Upgrading Facilities: Modernizing gyms, locker rooms, and performance spaces for students and the community.

#### 5B: JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 28J

## WHY IT MATTERS FOR BE WELL ZONE:

This initiative enhances safety, expands career training, and improves mental health services for students in the Be Well Zone. It also upgrades school facilities, benefiting both students and the local community with improved shared spaces.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

#### IF YOU'RE FOR IT:

You want to improve schools, creating safer environments, and preparing students for future careers, without increasing taxes.

#### IF YOU'RE AGAINST IT:

You might be worried about the district taking on \$1 billion in debt, even though it won't raise taxes, and how they'll manage repayment over time.

## SOURCES

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- 2. Denver Office of Economic Development, 2023 Report
- 3. Denver Housing Authority, Neighborhood Data Report 2023
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- 5. Regional Transportation District (RTD), 2022 Transportation Data Report
- 6. Colorado Department of Education, 2023 Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Data
- 7. Denver Public Schools, 2023 Enrollment and Socioeconomic Data 1
- 8. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Breed-Specific Legislation Insights
- 9. City of Aurora, Public Safety and City Council Records, 2023

